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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ATHENS 000373

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/08/2021

TAGS: [GR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CY](#) [TU](#) [RS](#) [YI](#) [VE](#) [GT](#) [EU](#) [AMB](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S TOUR D'HORIZON WITH GREEK FOREIGN  
MINISTER MOLYVIATIS

REF: A. ATHENS 341

[1](#)B. STATE 20173

[1](#)C. 05 ATHENS 3042

Classified By: Ambassador Charles P. Ries. Reasons 1.4(b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: In the face of an ongoing phone-tapping scandal (Ref A) of high-level Greek Government officials (in which the U.S. has been fingered in the media as the culprit), Greek FM Molyviatis used a one-on-one lunch February 8 with Ambassador in a central Athens restaurant to emphasize his commitment to the U.S.-Greece relationship. Greece-Turkey-Cyprus issues were the focus of their discussion, with Molyviatis agreeing that the time seemed ripe for a new UN-led process on Cyprus, while bemoaning Turkish overflights in the Aegean and unhelpful attitudes in Ankara. Molyviatis reported that Russian FM Lavrov, during his Feb 6-7 visit to Greece, said that "Russia could accept the inevitable" on Kosovo (Greek energy discussions with Lavrov reported septel). Per Ref B, Molyviatis said he saw no reason why Greece could not support Guatemala's UNSC candidacy. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador's February 8 lunch with the Foreign Minister was originally scheduled to take place at the Ambassador's residence. Following revelations that unknown agents had tapped the cell phones Greek Government officials including the PM, FM Molyviatis proposed the venue be changed to the Grande Bretagne Hotel in Athens Center where all could see that the U.S.-Greece relationship was unimpaired. For the first time since Ambassador's introductory call on the FM, there was a photographer present at the top of the meeting. (The picture was prominently carried in a number of Athens dailies February 9.) Addressing the eavesdropping case, Molyviatis gave his opinion that the whole hullabaloo had been unnecessary. It would have been sufficient to hand the matter to the judicial authorities for investigation and, if appropriate, prosecution, he said. But now, both he and the Prime Minister were keen to show that the current hysteria did not detract from excellent U.S.-Greece relations.

[1](#)3. (C) Ambassador asked whether the current Vodafone imbroglio had changed the PM's plans to reshuffle his Cabinet (including Molyviatis). Molyviatis said that before he had traveled to London (for the Afghanistan Compact ministerial meeting on Jan 31), the PM had told him "When you get back, we'll have a whiskey and sort things out." Well, Molyviatis said, he hadn't yet had that whiskey, and was waiting for the call from the Prime Minister. He intimated that the PM could make the call at any time.

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[1](#)4. (C) Turning to Cyprus, Molyviatis told Ambassador that Cypriot President Papadopoulos had spoken to UNSYG Annan after the UNSYG's meeting with Turkish PM Erdogan at Davos. Papadopoulos reportedly told Annan that Nicosia wanted to start a new UN process on Cyprus, and he asked Annan to dispatch Special Rep Gambari soon to the region. Papadopoulos and Annan also were said to agree to meet "somewhere in Europe" in March. Before that, Molyviatis reported, Papadopoulos wanted to come to Athens for consultations. Molyviatis then broke off his narration to call PM Karamanlis to relay Papadopoulos' request. According to Molyviatis, Karamanlis said to say yes, but "to push him off for a bit." Molyviatis then placed a call to President Papadopoulos (according to Molyviatis, he got Papadopoulos out of a Cabinet meeting), and relayed Karamanlis' answer: yes, but we'll work on dates. When Papadopoulos pressed Molyviatis for a timeframe, Molyviatis said he would call him back.

[1](#)5. (C) Phone calls finished, Molyviatis confided that he was worried that absent a Cyprus process, Turkey's EU accession track was in trouble. This, he noted, was in no one's interest -- not Greece's, not Turkey's, not the U.S.'s. He admitted that any process would probably fail, because Papadopoulos "only wanted to look good in international eyes." Papadopoulos was, he said, "stung by the Turkish maneuver" (the recent proposal to open ports and airports). Ambassador pointed out to Molyviatis that the Turkish proposal was not a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. It would be, however, a way to restart movement. Molyviatis

acknowledged the point, but regretted that Turkey did not present it in this way.

16. (C) As an aside, Molyviatis reported that Papadopoulos had floated the idea of hosting a meeting on the ongoing controversy about cartoons of the Prophet. He had suggested bringing together the northern Europeans and representatives from the Middle East in Cyprus. Molyviatis said he thought this was Papadopoulos trying to make himself a bigger player in international affairs. Ambassador noted, with regret, that it was more likely a Papadopoulos ploy to get the Nordics to see the Cyprus issue in a more favorable light for Nicosia. Molyviatis, laughing, agreed.

17. (C) In sum, Molyviatis reiterated that all sides wanted a process restarted. All sides had their own agendas, it was true, but nevertheless, we had general acceptance of the need for a process. The question now was, he said, whether UNSYG Annan would be interested in starting a process that he would not oversee to the end, given the UNSYG's expiring term. Ambassador noted that the Cyprus issue would not be solved in a few months' time, so perhaps it made sense to take advantage of the momentary convergence of opinion on restarting a UN-led dialogue.

18. (C) In the lunch's second dramatic act, Defense Minister Spiliotopoulos called Molyviatis to report that six Turkish aircraft had just violated Greek six-mile territorial airspace and overflowed Greek islands and islets. Molyviatis took the opportunity to underscore Greek unhappiness with such continuing Turkish behaviour. He told Ambassador that following the opening of the EU accession process with Turkey on October 3, both PM Karamanlis and FM Molyviatis received "thanks for your help" letters from PM Erdogan and FM Gul. But neither letter was signed, he grumped.

19. (C) Ambassador asked whether it was possible that Cyprus would, in frustration, dispatch one of its ships to a Turkish port in an effort to force implementation of the customs union protocol. Molyviatis said he did not worry about this coming to pass soon; for one thing, the European Parliament had not yet ratified the Ankara Protocol, so the Cypriots wouldn't have a basis to do it. Later, however, he admitted that this could be a card Nicosia could play. Again, he stressed, restarting a Cyprus process would help mitigate bad feeling.

10. (C) Molyviatis asked Ambassador for an update on the Cyprus arms issue. Ambassador replied that we did not yet have a response to Greece's proposal for resolution (Ref C). Any solution, however, would need to have three elements: (1) all U.S.-origin arms must be locked-down and under Greek control; (2) there must be a verification mechanism, including surprise inspections; and (3) any post-87 equipment, including equipment upgraded with post-87 kits, must come off the island. Molyviatis noted that the last point might be the most difficult.

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11. (C) In a discussion of Russian FM Lavrov's February 6-7 visit to Athens (reported septels), Molyviatis told Ambassador that Lavrov was clear that Russia "will accept the inevitable on Kosovo."

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VENEZUELA/GUATEMALA IN THE UNSC  
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12. (C) Ambassador delivered Ref B demarche requesting Greek support for Guatemala's 2007-2008 candidacy, as well as opposing Venezuela's candidacy. Molyviatis took the points on board, and said Greece had not yet been lobbied by either country. He told Ambassador he saw no reason not to support Guatemala for the UNSC seat. (Embassy will follow up with the IO Director on Feb 9.)  
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